Leys News

Delivered FREE to over 5000 homes across the Leys

Issue 64 - December 2008

GREAT RESPONSE FROM THE COMMUNITY

Pictured above are six people who responded to our call for community journalists in our last issue. These photo-journalists have started training with us, and have already contributed to this edition of Leys News. Others are taking part in the 'writing for a community newspaper session' part of the short course. Anyone else interested should contact Leys News on 01865 711756.

In the Frame: Cristina Fernandez-Santamaria, Katie Chester, Artwell Ichaka, Jean Denham, Leah Owens and Blaise Gashugi.

A magical winter wonderland

ALL THE CHRISTMAS fun at Templars Square, Cowley begins on Saturday 29 November with the opening of Santa's Grotto. Set for the first time inside one of the shop units, the grotto is a magical place for children and adults to visit in the run up to Christmas, every Saturday and Sunday and on 22, 23 and 24 December. Santa and his elves will be inside the grotto while outside there's a fairground with free rides on the cups and saucers, mini waltzers as well as a coconut shy, Hook the Duck and more.

Children who visit Santa will receive a present, a letter to write addressed to Santa and a recyclable hessian bag to put them in. There will also be the chance to buy a photograph at the same time. The price of admission is £2.50, but accompanying adults go free.

Templars Square's Patsy Bateman told Leys News that "It will be a magical experience for all ages. I can't put it into words. Come and see for yourselves."

What are you waiting for?

Hello, we're witches!

Look at our Halloween pictures on page 2

Where's our bus?

Petition to restore Sunday buses, page 7

I'm a princess!

Turn to page 18 for our Competition Corner

I'm Flying!

Taekwondo champion, turn to back page

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Leys News is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community. We are not affiliated to any political party, and we operate an equal opportunities policy. We encourage any resident to get involved in our work.

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www.leysnews.co.uk

Leys News 65
Out early February

Copy & Advertising Deadline:
Fri 14th January

. . . . Letters . . .

Three questions
I have three questions for you:
Why are all the clocks at the top of the Clockhouse in Greater Leys showing different times?
Why have all the bus shelters been renewed in Blackbird Leys but not in Greater Leys?
Why is there so much horse manure on the road from the Kassam Stadium to the Science Park?
I would be most grateful for answers to any, or all of these questions.

A Leys News Reader

WE LOVE TO get letters from readers. Next issue every published letter will get a £10 voucher to be spent at Borders book shop in Magdalen Street which can be spent on books, games or music.

Letters can be emailed to editor@leysnews.co.uk or posted to 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, OX4 7BX by 7th January 2009.

Above: Halloween at Nash's. Once again the staff at Nash's Bakery in the Top Shops got into the Halloween act and donned costumes for the day. Pictured here are Linda Edwards, Anna Schmid and Jessica Harper.

Right: Potters Court celebrated Halloween with a party in their common room. Janet, Alan, Micky and Avis put up the ghostly decorations and cooked a tasty supper, which was washed down with "Witches Brew".

photo: Jean Denham

. . . Editorial . . .

AS THE festive season approaches one of the main topics of conversation is the grim economic climate and how people can afford all those extras at this time of year. We hear much anecdotal evidence that paints a picture of layoffs, redundancies and enforced shutdowns on the increase. For individual families this causes much worry, stress and uncertainty. What we hope for is for people to get through this difficult time and help each other out where possible. This is a time when community and neighbourly spirit is more important than ever. In this issue we have featured the Agnes Smith Advice Centre as a first point of call for people who are in difficulty, particularly with debt problems, and the invaluable service that they offer.

On another note it is good news to see that Blackbird Leys will sometime next year get its 24 hour a day police post at the old Health Centre on Blackbird Leys Road. This can only be helpful to have a more visible and responsive police service on the doorstep.

Also in this issue Leys News is particularly pleased to welcome the many local people who have come forward and responded to our call for community journalists and photographers. Reading this issue you will see the first fruits of their work as the training that we offer is underway. We would like to extend this training opportunity in the new year and allow people a chance to get involved with our community newspaper.

A happy Christmas and a much brighter 2009 to all.

A hungry blackbird getting his fill of seasonal berries

Leys News Drop-in
Monday 5th January 2009
At Leys Linx, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 1pm-2pm

Come along and tell us your news, or comment on how we can improve the paper.

__Leys News__ acknowledges valuable advice from Matt Dillon at Lloyds TSB and Mark Rusher from Critchleys. __Leys News__ acknowledges financial assistance from: BMW Group Plant Oxford, Catalyst Communities Housing Association, DW Contractors, Oxford Citizens Housing Association, Oxford Brookes University, Blackbird Leys Parish Council, Oxfordshire Community Foundation, Oxford City Council's South East Area Committee, and support from Newsquest (Oxfordshire).

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Opinion divided on playground equipment

Steve Manning showing the equipment at Kingfisher Green

THE NEW PLAY equipment in Kingfisher Green, Brake Hill, installed in August, has attracted much criticism from young people and parents alike for being dangerous. Steve Manning's daughter Hayley broke her wrist and he spoke of many other injuries to children, including trapped fingers, broken arms and injuries to faces. Creche worker Jan Manning criticized the council for its standoffish attitude and claimed that the play equipment was breaking, and is not fit for purpose, and she wanted the council to change the equipment before there was a more serious injury.

In response Oxford City Council feel that the equipment does meet safety standards and have sent out personnel to Kingfisher Green to listen to parents' views. According to the council's Ian Shepherd they feel that as with any new equipment there is an adjustment period when young people get used to it and sometimes push the limits. They have no plans to change it. The council did, however, do consultation work with residents prior to installation on the type of equipment and feels that the users will have to take care and get used to the equipment.

Major spring clean community event planned for the Leys

IMPROVING THE APPEARANCE of the Leys so that people can take pride in where they live was the top priority for residents according to the results of a recent public consultation. Action has already been taken to clean up the estate with the entire Neighbourhood Action Groups' police neighbourhood team spending a day in August clearing up some of the worst litter grot spots.

Now, OxClean Spring Clean 2009 is looking for local groups in the Leys to carry out a major clean up. Interested groups select either a place in their immediate neighbourhood which they think could do with a clean up – or, a particular grot spot in the Leys. Volunteers from these groups carry out a two-hour litter pick at a time of their choice on either Friday 5th March or Saturday 6th March 2009.

OxClean - in partnership with the Oxford City Council and The Oxford Times - co-ordinates this city - wide event. Equipment such as litter pickers and plastic bags will be delivered to the Leys and all the litter collected will be picked up from the roadside on the day of the pick. Tips on how to run a successful, safe and fun litter pick and publicity material will also be provided.

The first OxClean Spring Clean took place in 2008. Nearly one hundred community groups, schools and businesses organised litter picks across the city with an estimated fifteen hundred highly motivated, good humoured volunteers taking part. Many different types of group were represented – including residents' associations, youth groups, church congregations, allotment associations, environmental groups, and social clubs.

A huge quantity of litter was collected. Spring Clean 2009 aims to make an even bigger impact on the city with even more litter being removed from streets and public spaces. To achieve this, OxClean need many more groups to take part.

Can you help?

Do you live in a neighbourhood that could do with a Spring Clean? Do you want to do something about it? Could you form a group of likeminded people to carry out a litter pick?

Are you a member of a group, society or club? If so, could you get a group of members to get together for a two-hour litter pick?

Would you like information about groups near you who have already registered to take part in Spring Clean 2009?

If you can answer yes to any of these questions then go to oxclean.org.uk or see the advert below.

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Hansel and Gretel come to the Leys

A FAMILIAR tale of breadcrumbs and witches is coming to the Leys this month. Hansel & Gretel, retold by Mike Kenny, will be performed at the Glow Hall on Tuesday 16th December at 6pm.

Will the two children ever find their way back home? Will the future be free-range or oven-ready? Find out for yourself in this family show for ages six and over.

Hansel and Gretel is an Oxfordshire Touring Theatre Company production, co-produced with Pegasus Theatre. For tickets to the Glow Hall production, ring 01865 749936. For full tour details visit www.ottc.org.uk or ring 01865 249444.

Warm winter windows

OXFORD ARTISTS ARE creating window displays with a difference this winter. WinterLight Windows is a series of installations created by artist-led community groups to brighten up Oxfordshire windows this winter.

WinterLight Windows, commissioned by Oxford Inspires, was created by Oxford artist Lois Muddiman. She explains: "A German friend had told me about a tradition in her home town. Each house puts up one of the dates from the 1st to the 24th [December] in their window and on the corresponding date, neighbours gather outside that house to sing carols. The host provides hot drinks and snacks.

"It is a very warm community event that everyone takes part in. As part of a group brainstorming ideas for WinterLight, I applied the same idea but with a twist: we could do this with artist's installations in the windows."

The seasonal installations are appearing all over Oxfordshire, with an official unveiling of each window. There are two in Oxford: one at the Westway Shopping Centre in Botley and one at Boswells on Broad Street.

Many of the artists involved in WinterLight Windows are Fine Art graduates from Oxford Brookes University.

For more information see http://www.oxfordinspires.org/Listings/events2008.html

Magical tales in the mirror tent

WE ALL KNOW the stories: the Emperor's New Clothes, the Princess and the Pea. Perhaps you've heard of the Snow Queen or seen the Disney version of the Little Mermaid. But did you know that we can thank just one person for hundreds of the stories we tell our kids today? Hans Christian Andersen is the author behind Thumbelina, the Ugly Duckling and lots more.

This winter, Creation Theatre Company offer a "rollercoaster ride" through Andersen's best-loved stories, all dramatised in a way that promises to bring fresh perspective to these well-known tales.

The production, Hans Christian Andersen's Magical Tales, will take place in the Spiegeltent at BMW Group Plant Oxford. This is an antique tent with a mirrored roof where theatre is performed "in the round" as the audience sit at individual tables.

David Parrish, producer and artistic director at Creation, said: "We are delighted to be back for another show at the Mirror Tent. The tent is incredibly popular with our audiences and works beautifully with our innovative style of storytelling."

Previous winter productions in the mirrored tent include Tales from the Brothers Grimm and Arabian Nights.

Hans Christian Andersen's Magical Tales runs until 17th January 2009. Ticket prices start at £8.50. Box office: 01865 766266.

SO IT'S THE December issue...which means one thing...Christmas!
So as it's the last issue of 2008 it's only right that I peruse over the year past and what it has brought to us musically. The summer saw the return of the UK garage scene "newskool" with H20 bringing into this year but also loads of clubs overwhelmed by some of the best DJs of yesteryear. OX4 radio had a month's live broadcast. Bringing all its musical flavors to your ears. I was lucky enough to get the chance to play and still am a great supporter of the project which is still going strong on OX4.net

The festivals were mud free and the line ups controversial. But my opinion is that it brought musical tastes together in a way never thought possible - an appreciation for musicians and bands alike with all kinds of different people mixing it together: Jay Z and Neil Diamond on the same stage at Glastonbury (who'd have thought it!); Britney spears got a grip and grew her hair back; everyone was dancing like solja boy; and the long awaited Oasis album seems nearly forgotten. The Foo Fighters brought the meaning of rock to Wembley, and Muse weren't far behind; The Verve came back with a new album that made us all revert back to their old ones, and the Kings of Leon went all commercial on us.

Liverpool sent us Paul McCartney, and has just hosted the European music awards - making it musically a stop you should make.

R&B moved on from Umbrella and gave us: Flo Rida, Rick Ross and Solja Boy; rapping over mobile phones turned into phenomena; and British hip hop was put on the map. And this month brings Eminem back from retirement. With his new album Relapse being released this month, shortly followed by the long awaited Dr Dre album and something else from Fifty Cent. The end of the year will also bring fresh material from Razorlight, Glasvagus, Britney Spears and Take That.

So that was 2008 in a nut shell. 2009 has a lot to answer for!
In January go and buy Twice as Nice compilation, relive the dreamscape days, and rediscover Lilly Allen early February.

Have a great Christmas and see you all on the other side!

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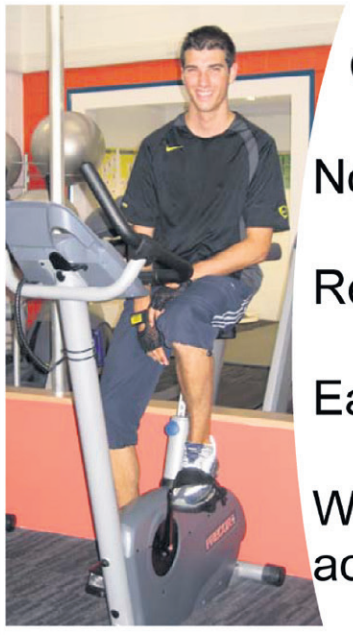

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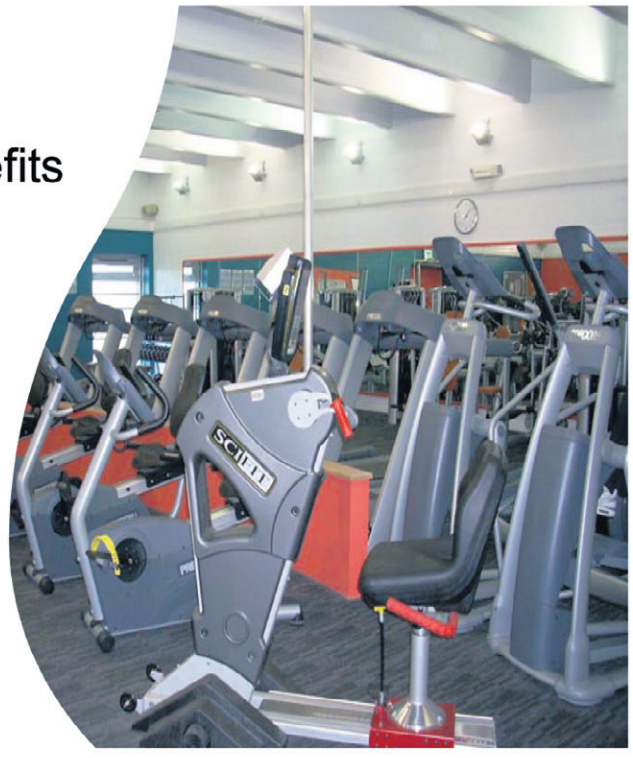

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Petition to restore Sunday buses

Interviews and photography by Cristina Fernandez Santamaria and Jean Denham

GREATER LEYS resident and campaigner for people with disabilities Paul Scarrott has been getting people to join him in signing a petition asking the County Council to consider subsidizing a Sunday bus service to Greater Leys. Together with his girlfriend, Jackie De Banks, the couple, over October and early November, gathered almost 150 signatures in support of their push for the bus service, and handed it over to Oxfordshire County Council towards the end of November. Mr Scarrott also works in a voluntary capacity for Transport for All, which tackles issues of access and transport for people with disabilities.

Community journalists from Leys News took a poll of some Greater Leys residents for their views and this is what they found near the Spar Shop and on Long Ground.

Jean Denham who lives in Robin Place said "I think that having no bus service on a Sunday severely restricts travel on this day for the residents of Greater Leys. None more so than the elderly residents who find it difficult to walk through to Blackbird Leys to catch a bus, and most certainly would not want to walk back now that the dark nights are here. Sunday can be a lonely day for people who live on their own and a trip out to Cowley Centre or the city centre can brighten the day for them".

Lee Loveridge who lives in Plover Drive with his young family was in favour of a Sunday service. He said that "it would be beneficial to the older residents who live close by."

Above: Amanda Sykes lives in Tarragon Drive with her young family and regularly uses the 12 and 12A which run through Greater Leys on weekdays. She does not drive and would certainly use the bus on a Sunday should there be one.

Right: Anthony Pitson lives in Plover Drive. He is in favour of a Sunday bus service and would certainly use it. He commented that this would be even more helpful to the residents now that the winter is upon us. Mr Pitson picks his children up from Barton each Sunday and has to walk with them from Blackbird Leys to his home in Greater Leys in the cold and dark. A Sunday service would be a great help to him, as it would to the majority of the people who gave their views.

Below: Vanessa Lashbrook lives in Plover Drive and would appreciate a Sunday service through Greater Leys, which would make travelling much easier for herself and her two young sons. She would definitely use this service.

Are you a sole-trader, a small business or thinking about starting a small business?

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GARDENER
Music teacher
BEAUTY THERAPIST
HAIRDRESSER
PLUMBER
Babysitter
MAN-WITH-VAN

Leys News and **Business Link** have teamed up to offer you the chance to advertise your services or prospective services completely free in the February issue of Leys News.

You will also be entitled to free business advice from Business Link Enterprise Gateway Service.

For further information or to make an appointment to see our business advisor call or text Paula Williams on 07595 586079, or email enterprise@businesslinksolutions.co.uk.
To apply for a free ad in Leys News under this scheme email advertising@leysnews.co.uk or call 01865 711756 - please note in December the office is only open on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10am - 2pm.

Business Link

FREE! Dance Lessons

Sponsored by Greater Leys Housing Consortium

Following the success of the A2 Dominion Housing Groups 'Stars in our Yard' of earlier in the year, they have now joined forces with the other landlords on Greater Leys – OCHA and Catalyst – to provide FREE dance lessons to boys and girls aged 9 to 18 for one year.

The sessions will be held in The Barn on Nightingale Ave. They will be held on a Wednesday evening from 4.45pm to 5.45pm. Please be at the Barn by 4.30pm for a prompt start.

They will start on Wednesday the 7th of January 2009 run for 13 weeks until the 1st of April, break for two weeks and then restart on the 22nd of April and run for 13 weeks until the 15th of July.

There will then be a break of 6 weeks before restarting on the 2nd of September and running every week till the 30th of December 2009. There may be some intention to run into a further year, a decision will be based on the take up for this initial year.

The dance sessions will be run by Ms Kelly Chandler whose expertise has trained many local young people to a European and world class level.

Class size is limited to 30 places. Make sure to turn up early or reserve a place with the form.

To reserve a place please fill in and return this form:

My name and address is: .....

.....

.....

Number of children attending: .....

First come first served for 30 places

Please Return to: Terry Weston, A2Dominion HG, Godstow Court, 5 West Way, Botley OX2 0GE

Street wardens help with cycling training at primary schools

FOR OVER FOUR years the Street Wardens have been working with Oxfordshire County Council teaching cycle proficiency to primary school children and have completed courses at Pegasus, Windale, Orchard Meadow and St. John Fisher Schools.

Just before the October half-term break they completed a six week training course with eight children from Windale School, who all passed.

The County Council examiner Mr Wakeman was very impressed with the children and their confidence, as their training and the test took place on a busy bus route, on Pegasus Road and Blackbird Leys Road.

Mr Wakeman commented that the children were very attentive and well behaved and were a credit to their school. The school held a special assembly for them. The children who passed were Georgia Horwood, Diana Lima, Jodie Lee Washington, Kawthar Salim, Kai Logan, Alanta Hissy, Ethan Minns and Molly Tipper (not present in photo). The wardens have now moved onto Orchard Meadow to start another course.

In the October half-term week the Junior Wardens undertook a litter pick amongst the hedges on Blackbird Leys Road bridge and filled ten black bags of litter. At the end of the week the Street Wardens took the Junior Wardens out for a trip to the BBOWT Education centre at Sutton Courtenay, where they enjoyed woodland walks and collected leaves to make collages.

This activity was made possible through a generous donation from Blackbird Leys Parish Council as well as another from the South-East Area Committee.

Free legal advice now available

From left volunteer Trudi Ashmole with outreach worker Sally Clack with Charlmane Fatania on the webcam live from Witney.

A COUNTY-WIDE initiative to provide free legal advice via video link to anyone has just launched its first point in the Leys at The Leys Children's Centre at Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre. The service which began on Monday 17 November has been set up by Legal Advice Direct Solicitors and works with a live webcam directly from the centre into the Witney solicitors office. How it works is that if people need to get some legal advice they should turn up at the Children's Centre where they will be helped onto the system, which will enable them to ask questions via the webcam to an appropriate legal person at the other end. The centre stresses that this service is open to everyone, they do not need to be an existing user of the centre to use it.

The sessions will be on Monday afternoons from 1 to 5pm and will be run by outreach worker Sally Clack and volunteer Trudi Ashmole. There may be help available at other times, depending on staffing and people are encouraged to ring the main Children's Centre on 01865 779615 for availability.

The advice is available in many areas: from employment to housing, to community care, welfare benefits and others.

Jenny Martin of the centre said of the new service, "It opens up a whole range of new options for people and broadens out our reach across the age range."

The advice is free, but to get legal representation clients need to qualify for legal aid.

The scheme has been funded countywide by Oxfordshire County Council and the Children's Centre has paid for some of the resources on a local level.

Children's Centre gets into the spotlight

THE Leys Children's Centre at Cuddesdon Corner received a high profile visit from Schools Secretary Ed Balls on Monday 3 November. After receiving a briefing on the centre Mr Balls sat down to chat with parents and volunteers, and play with some of the children, before fielding questions from the local media.

He was accompanied on his visit by Andrew and Val Smith as well as the Oxfordshire Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Families, Louise Chapman. One young parent told him that "The centre has changed my life" and had been a huge confidence builder for her and others like her. The centre received glowing tributes from the minister, and he encouraged local people to "Come and see the Children's Centre. They do a wonderful job." It's a place where every child would want to come. "He was particularly impressed with the number of volunteers that the centre had recruited. It is one of 3000 across the country.

The Children's Centre runs a multitude of courses ranging from drop-ins for babies, to salsa classes, to an advice session, to a baby cafe and a Saturday Dad's Zone.

For further information see advert on page 16 or call the centre on 01865 773263.

Runaway trolleys

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL now offers a reporting service for abandoned supermarket trolleys. Local supermarkets have funded a company to collect trolleys on their behalf.

Call Trolley Collection Services directly on 01392 88210 or visit the Oxford City Council website and in the Environment section there is an online form to fill out. They have made a pledge to pick them up by the end of the next working day.

BLAP gets help and seeks space

IN OCTOBER fifteen Business in the Community volunteers spent a couple of days at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground helping to repair some of the play equipment, tidying up the garden and painting the kitchen.

According to BLAP's manager Alston Quammie the management committee are looking for help from Oxford City Council to take over the disused former space of the Blackbird Leys Pre-School next door. The pre-school closed in July. He said that capacity would be increased by 50% if they were able to take over the space and expand BLAP's facilities.

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Images show a typical Bryant home and interior.

Wishing all our readers a very Happy Christmas from all at Leys News

This issue's Health Page is all about some ways to get and keep fit locally for those of us with creaking knees and stiff joints and some tips to help reduce those fuel bills.

Stretch and relax in the Clockhouse

Relaxing on one leg: tutor Emilia Cole, and students Eulie Maloney, Truus Arnold, John Roy, Gina Gail and Jackie Cole.

"It's invigorating and refreshing" is how John Roy described 'Stretch and Relax', the weekly drop-in at the Clockhouse for the over 50's. John, a former builder, is one of the regular attenders at the Tuesday morning sessions which last an hour and have been running for nearly a year under the friendly and encouraging eye of tutor Emilia Cole. Another attendee is Truus Arnold, who cycles over for the 10am start from Blackbird Leys and says that it gets her out of the house and feeling fitter.

Emilia describes the group as being very friendly and eager to learn and she mixes a range of exercises designed to reduce stiffness, increase flexibility and improve balance. She ends each session with some breathing control exercises and a five minute meditation. There is no need to book and classes cost an affordable £1.50 a session and end up with a cup of tea or coffee and a bite to eat. The class restarts in the new year on Tuesday 6 January at 10am.

Clockhouse activities organiser Sally Meachim said that other new groups were proposed for the new year, including a knitting and crochet group and a gardening group. The centre also held a Christmas crafts fair on Saturday 15 November.

Getting fit and eating well

REG KERNOCK, secretary of the Blackbird Leys Allotment Society, dropped into the Leys News office to talk about getting and keeping an allotment in these times of upwardly spiralling food prices.

The society has two sites, one next to Watlington Road and the other in Kestrel Crescent, totalling 120 plots. There are currently two vacancies on the Kestrel Crescent site and another 12 at Watlington Road.

Reg himself has three plots together at Kestrel Crescent and keeps himself and his extended family replete with vegetables year round. He is retired and finds that people do need to put the hours in to keep on top of the work required to keep an allotment.

Reg looks much younger than his years and he puts it down to the exercise and the number of hours he spends outdoors. But he would like to see younger people get involved with the allotments, noting that people can share a plot, which is approximately 10 by 30 feet in size. The annual fee for a whole plot in Blackbird Leys is a bargain at £20 a year.

Both Windale and Pegasus schools have their own allotments, and in the latter case produce goes straight towards the school's kitchen and cafe. Pegasus also have more plots within their school grounds. One of Windale's teachers is known for having surplus produce at the school gate.

Right now Reg is currently preparing leeks, parsnips, kale, purple sprouting broccoli, brussel sprouts and potatoes. He says that the committee are looking at holding open days in the future to encourage more people to get involved in the allotment movement.

To find out more about BBL Allotment Society either call Reg on 454524 or Oxford City Council Allotments Service on 252900. It could be the key to a more sustainable and healthier life.

Fuel Poverty

Are you dreaming of some snow – the ideal "White Christmas"? Or is the winter weather a nightmare of cold and damp?

AT THIS TIME of year, lots of people find themselves having to spend over the odds on heating their home. There is even a term for it – if you have to spend more than 10% (£1 out of every £10) of your money coming in, just to heat your home properly, then you are experiencing Fuel Poverty. You could find yourself facing difficult decisions, such as whether to spend money on the gas or electricity meter, or on food and other essentials.

What has this got to do with health? Living in a cold, damp house can mean:

- You are more likely to catch colds, flu, or even bronchitis and pneumonia.
- Some people could have an increased risk of heart attack or stroke – this is because your blood pressure goes up when you get cold.
- If your house is really cold you might be more at risk of accidents and falls, as this affects how your body works and moves.
- More mould and dust mites in a damp house can mean more asthma and allergies.
- You could end up feeling low or anxious – especially if you have money worries as well.

How warm is warm enough?
To stay healthy, the World Health Organisation recommends you heat:

- Your living room to 21 degrees C
- Other rooms you use to 18 degrees C
- Halls and stairways to 16 degrees C

This may all sound a bit dismal, but the good news is that there are things you can do to improve the situation!

Here are some ideas:

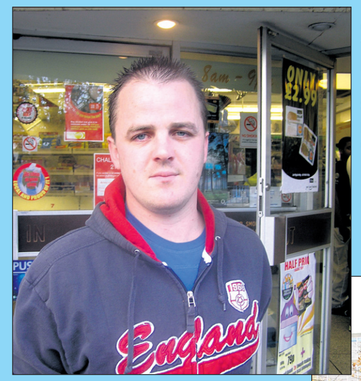
- Shop around for the cheapest gas and electricity suppliers. Some suppliers do special deals for over-60s, so do your research! You can get more advice on this from www.nea.org.uk/switching-suppliers/
- Make sure you are getting all the money you are entitled to – your local advice centre can check this for you. Some people automatically get extra benefit payments in cold weather. You can find out more about these payments from the Agnes Smith Advice Centre (call 01865 770206). If debts and money worries are getting on top of you, get advice. It is often possible to get your repayments reduced.
- Are you paying to heat rooms that you don't even use? It may sound extreme, but moving house could make a difference! The City Council and most Housing Associations have transfer schemes for people who want to move to a smaller property.
- Insulate your home – loads of heat is lost through walls, roofs, or just draughts. You can get advice and grants from Oxford City Council's Sustainable Energy Team on 01865 252887.
- You could also try the Warm Front grant scheme, which pays towards insulation, repairs and new heating systems. You could be eligible if you receive benefits and you are 60 or over, disabled, have a child under 16 or are pregnant or on a low income.
Call 0800 072 0151.
- Learn how to use your heating controls properly, and set the right temperature. Tackle damp by improving ventilation (try opening windows slightly, and making sure air bricks aren't covered).
- Dry clothes outdoors, keep lids on pans, and keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to stop steam escaping.
- Gas bottles create a lot of damp, so avoid using them where possible.

There are lots more ideas and resources on saving money and heating your home on http://www.nea.org.uk, or call the Energy Saving Trust on 0800 512 012.

So what do you think?

Community journalists Leah Owens, Katie Chester, Blaise Gahugi and Anna Pavelin asked shoppers in Blackbird Leys how the credit crunch has affected them.

Mrs Carter: "Three members of my family have been laid off building work, and one of them has a four month old baby. My husband has just found a job after being on the dole, and we're actually worse off now. We're getting into arrears with rent, council tax and electricity. I've got nine grandchildren and not one of them will have a present this Christmas. I think it's going to get worse, and it's very frightening.



Craig Logan: "Credit crunch hasn't really affected me. Some prices like petrol are coming down."

Stephen Bourton: I'm unemployed and I haven't really noticed any changes.

Gill Bowlar: "You notice that some of the prices have gone up, but not really an awful lot. Food has gone up but supermarkets do other options like their own products. We've retired so only go out a couple of times a week."

Advice and help for everyone

Al Cane visits the Agnes Smith Advice Centre

There's a friendly welcome at the door of the Agnes Smith Advice Centre in Blackbird Leys Top Shops from Steve, the man in charge of the reception, who waves me in for my appointment with manager Jim Saunders. I'm not here for advice, but to find out if the economic downturn or recession has driven more people than ever through its doors looking for help.

Background

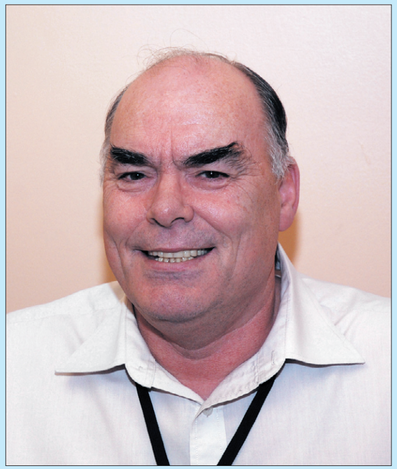
The advice centre has been around in different forms for just over 30 years and was begun informally by Bill Smith, father of Agnes, before establishing itself in the Holy Family Church Hall for many years before moving to its present home. Agnes Smith took over from her father and was well known for fighting the corner for her clients. She died just over five years ago and was held in such high esteem that the advice centre was renamed after her in tribute. There are currently 11 staff and volunteers and one student placement.

Debt assistance

There are of course no longer debtors prisons, as in Little Dorrit, but there are now 'debtors prisons of the mind' where people can feel trapped by their own debt situation. The worst thing people can do is ignore it and pretend it doesn't exist.

Jim Saunders tells me in answer to my first question that yes, there has been an increase recently in the number of people coming in seeking help and advice because of debt and in particular recently many laid off from the building trades.

His general advice is for people to prioritize their debts and recognize that they may have a problem before it gets too late in the day and well before a bailiff comes knocking on the door. His strong advice is that should bailiffs come to the door they should not be let in under any circumstances, even to the extent of closing windows. Jim says that people can book an appointment with a specialist at the centre where they can confidentially go through their financial commitments and work out a plan for dealing with their situation. He says that creditors will generally prove to be more willing to listen if they see people are taking responsibility for their money management.



Jim Saunders, manager of the Agnes Smith Centre

Fuel poverty

According to Jim Saunders fuel poverty has definitely increased in recent months with many people reporting that they find it hard to make the increased charges. He tells me that there is a hardship fund for cases of extreme need. This has been set up with contributions from the utility companies themselves. People may want to explore changing fuel providers, the easiest way to do this is to use a price comparison website for example two of them are www.energyhelpline.com or www.uswitch.com

The advice centre's catchment centre is generally Oxford-wide, but sometimes people come from further afield. The centre also offers legal advice every other Thursday from a solicitor from Bower and Bailey. There's also advice on benefits, disabilities, employment and housing. Jim says that if the centre can't help people they probably know someone who can and will refer people on where appropriate.

Asked for two pieces of advice Jim would give out he said "Come in sooner. People don't come in soon enough when they get into trouble" and "Don't let the bailiffs in." He says it's a stressful job, there is always a need for new volunteers, open to anyone over 16. He tells me that more secure funding to keep the centre going would be helpful, particularly when it is expected to get busier. It helps to have a sense of humour at the Agnes Smith Advice Centre and it is essential to help people deal with the problems that people walk in with. I leave the centre with a bit of friendly banter at the door - and a sense that the people here do their utmost to help people in need of help, which is an incredibly valuable service in these times of economic hardship.

Case study

JIM TELLS ME of a woman in her 30's, a single parent, who came to the centre a year ago in a fairly desperate state with many debts and medical problems. Advisors at the centre helped her sort out and prioritize her debts and together decided that the best course to follow was to declare herself bankrupt. This she did and since then she has recovered from the dire situation she was in, and is now maintaining a stable financial situation and is healthier and much more relaxed in herself. So in under a year she has managed to turn her life around and can look forward to a more secure and stable future thanks in part to the advice centre.

Agnes Smith Centre opening times

There are two drop-in sessions a week at the Agnes Smith Centre:

- *Mondays from 2 to 4pm*
- *Fridays from 10am to 12 noon*

The Agnes Smith Centre also holds a further session in the Farmhouse building in Greater Leys on Tuesdays from 10am to 12 noon.

All three of these sessions are busy. The advice centre itself is open to the public from 10am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm Mondays to Thursdays and 10am to 1pm on Fridays and is closed to the public on Friday afternoons.

All about bailiffs

BAILIFFS HAVE BEEN around for over a thousand years and "distress" (the procedure for bailiffs to seize goods) was so commonplace in the 13th Century, that the Magna Carta of 1215 gave the English Barons the right to distress even against the King.

Bailiffs are often described as debt collectors but this is not quite accurate. The crucial difference is that debt collectors cannot take people's goods and sell them to pay what's owed. With rare exceptions, bailiffs enforce court orders and warrants issued by Government departments. These are mostly to do with the recovery of debt but bailiffs also can evict and arrest people.

Tips for a thrify Christmas

1. Use last year's Christmas cards as gift tags.
2. Use magazine picture pages to wrap small gifts.
3. Make wrapping paper out of your children's artwork, or create your own on plain paper…
4. Hand deliver all Christmas cards where possible.
5. For saving money on next years decorations buy in the sale
6. Decorate your house by bringing the outside in, using pinecones and holly. Sprinkle with a few drops of pine scented oil if you have it on hand.
7. Get out the board games, consider doing a loan/swap with games from neighbours if your kids are bored with the ones you own.
8. Set a budget for each person and stick to it.
9. Club together with family or friends to buy in bulk.
10. Save wrapping paper, cards and decorations for next year.

Looking to get back to work? Or a career change?

Come and talk to us...

Our Job Brokerage Scheme is designed to support people into obtaining skills and qualifications that link to real job opportunities

- We can offer you a wealth of information and training, and support you in your return to work or in starting that new career you are looking for.
- We have a dedicated team of Learning Champions (who you can talk to, who are willing to share their experiences with you).
- Our work-ready courses include guidance in confidence building, CV preparation, interview and presentation skills and work placement.
- We work closely with employers to tailor training that will give better chances of securing a job.

If you are interested call Learning Communities on 01865 749 936 or 714 492, or contact/text Jim Barlow on 0792 0211405

Ever watched the actors on TV and thought "I could do that"?

Ever watched the actors and performers and thought "I could do better than that"?
Ever thought you could compose a really good story or screen play?

LEARNING COMMUNITIES, with various partners, is looking at some creative opportunities for the New Year. This includes:

- Writing and performing in your own 5 minute radio play;
- Working with MA student Michael Marshall to make an urban film;
- Writing and performing your own rhymes and poetry (beginners and advanced);
- Taking part in writing and performing a Blackbird Leys based play.

We are looking for actors, performers, singers and dancers, camera crews, video editors, set designers. Also we are looking for older people and youth. But most of all we are looking for people with ideas and powerful stories, who can or want to learn how to turn them into a production.

Register your interest now – drop into the community centre or leave a message on 01865 749936

Hansel & Gretel

by Mike Kenny

Co-produced with Pegasus Theatre

DESPERATE TIMES CALL for desperate measures! So when food is short and there are mouths to feed something's got to give. But when Mum and Dad leave the kids in the wood there turns out to be more questions than answers: Will the woodcutter turn out to be a man or a mouse? Will Hansel & Gretel ever find their way back home? Will the future be free-range or oven-ready? Find out in Mike Kenny's sparkling re-telling of this familiar tale of breadcrumbs and witches: it's the perfect recipe for a great night out. ... a family show for everyone aged six and over.

At the Glow Hall, Blackbird Leys, Tuesday 16th December 6.00pm. Family Ticket £3

Coming soon to the Leys!

Fed up with the winter already? Get ready for a journey into the heart of the sun!

Calling all would-be fusion scientists; next generation physicists and anyone interested in the question: "What would it be like to create a mini-sun on earth"? Come and meet the people who can make this happen and visit their special laboratory. The Sun Dome is coming to the Leys in the New Year with special activities to follow on the sun, energy and how we might keep the electricity on when all the oil runs out.

Watch this space for more info. Or call us on 01865 749936. Visit www.sundome.org.uk
Organised jointly by Culham Science Centre and Learning Communities

SEEDA South East England Development Agency — Working for England's World Class Region

Oxfordshire County Council — Children, Young People & Families — www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Learning Communities

"If I can do it, so can you" - A champion learner

SINGLE PARENT Donna Joy of Nightingale Avenue got a leaflet through her door from Catalyst Housing Association asking if she was interested in studying for free.

She had some time before left her job as a learning support assistant in a secondary school and was suffering from health problems and was looking for something to pick herself out of her situation. So she did and earlier this year, overcoming her initial fears, attended an information session at the Barn.

It wasn't long before she found herself studying housing at the Ealing and West London College in Hammersmith, London for one day a week. The qualification she was on was the Chartered Institute of Housing Level 2.

The course was free for her, travel to London was paid for, as were some expenses, including childcare. She couldn't have done it without these extra bits of help, as she has an eight year old daughter as well as older children.

The other part of the course was to do one day a week work experience and for that she came back home to Catalyst at the Farmhouse and worked with Sasha East, Catalyst's community involvement officer, whom she credits with keeping her motivated.

Donna has now completed the course successfully and says that she was awarded top marks on both of her assignments, a very rare achievement.

She had not studied like this since leaving school and was at the age of 42 someone who does that rare thing of going back to it.

She is now ready for more work, having decided to go into the housing area and will soon be applying for jobs out there in the world. In the meantime as a Learning Champion she is telling anyone who will listen that this is a brilliant opportunity to return to study.

The housing association is a recognized Open College Network training provider and provides many other relevant courses in the housing arena. Other housing associations may well have similar schemes.

The other interest of Donna's is in the field of photography and photo manipulation, where she has learnt to use the free image programme Gimp and produced some stunning results, including the one here (*left*) of her daughter Elisha with her friend Becky at the C.S.Lewis Nature Reserve in Risinghurst.

Below: Champion learner Donna Joy.

Outstanding!

LOCAL RESIDENT Sasha East, Catalyst's community involvement officer, was recently awarded the accolade of being the student with the 'most outstanding results', as a result of a two year study in Community Development at Ruskin College.

Congratulations Sasha!

Getting the skills to work

TWL is a new training centre in Cowley which is just starting a new 22 week entry to employment programme aimed at 16 to 18 year olds called E2e.

The TWL team are highly qualified and experienced practitioners who offer learners a work placement, the chance to raise their literacy and numeracy skills, receive a weekly Education Maintenance Allowance of £30 and to receive High Street Shopping Vouchers for achieving key points on the programme and finish up with an Employability Skills Award qualification.

TWL Training has been helping young people, adults and employers alike achieve their true potential through learning for over 25 years.

If you or someone you know is interested in taking part in this programme please call them on 01865 778419 or drop in to TWL on the second floor 213 Barns Road Cowley OX4 3UT.

A golden evening

THE 'Going for Gold' Showcase evening was held at Oxford Town Hall on Friday, 17th October, as part of a celebration of Black History Month and celebrated the young people's hard work, which was all carried out outside of school time.

The Lord Mayor presented the ten young people with their certificates at the end of the evening.

Jael Russell-Cartwright, Zacc Hyde-Thomas from Oxford School, Tia Thomas all from Oxford School, Addis Miller (Oxford Academy), Levi Hyde-Thomas (Oxford School), Kieran Ruskin (Matthew Arnold School), Laura Gayle (St Gregory the Great School), Esther Tolani (Cherwell School, Nendelmwa Goyol (Cheney School) and Rhaea Russell-Cartwright (Oxford School). The African Choir opened the evening with an uplifting song.

This was followed by seven powerpoint presentations on different black achievers - Oprah Winfrey (Jael), Walter Tull (Levi), Trisha Goddard (Tia), Martin Luther King (Addis), George Washington Carver (Zacc), Nelson Mandela (Kieran) and Ben Carson (Nendel), Rhaea had put together a display about Olaudah Equiano and spoke about his life. This was followed by a dance routine by Messy Jam and two songs - both original compositions - the first by Esther Tolani with the message that we all have to work hard to strive for what we want.

This was followed by Laura Gayle whose lyrics summed up a powerful message of the evening that we are all unique and equal and we should not accept injustice or cruelty to others.

Starlight, who ran the course, are keen to hear from anyone who would like to run this course in their own youth club, school or community group. There will be a DVD available soon of the show and they would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to view it. Brookes University funded Starlight to run this 'Going for Gold' course.

Poetry people

KINGFISHER GREEN, in Greater Leys, was the venue for a second award ceremony in October with accreditation going to Nathanial Bertram, Rory Campbell and Dean Sinclair, who all performed poetry at this summer's Cowley Road Carnival. The A Level accredited course in Poetry and Storytelling was run by internationally acclaimed poet Steve Larkin of Hammer and Tongue, who is also a Brookes lecturer. The course was funded and delivered by Brookes University and delivered by Fusion Arts.

Have you worked hard to get an education despite not coming from the "right" background?

LEYS NEWS wants to hear from people who have gone the extra mile to study. You don't have to have a degree; we're interested in people at all stages of the learning journey, including people currently working on their literacy and numeracy skills. You could tell your story in Leys News and help to inspire others.

Thanks to Oxford Brookes University for sponsoring this page. If you are interested in studying at Oxford Brookes please contact Marie Jones on 01865 484866 or marie.jones@brookes.ac.uk

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

What's on at The Leys Children's Centre

December 2008

* childcare available

		MORNING	AFTERNOON
MONDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner** 01865 773263 (Linked with Orchard Meadow School 01865 778609)	**Drop-in for Babies and parents/carers** 9.30am–11.30am Contact Mikko Enticknap, 01865 773263	**The Listening Centre** 12.30pm–9.00pm, phone 01865 794794
	Pegasus 01865 777175	**Salsa*** starting 10 November 9.30am–10.30am Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615	**PEEP for babies** (Birth – 1 year) 1.30pm – 2.30pm call 01865 395145 **Pottery*** alternate weeks 2.00pm – 3.00pm Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615
	Windale 01865 777796	**Stay and Play** 9.30am – 11.00am Contact Sara Collingwood 01865 777796	**How to Drugproof Your Children*** starting 10 November 1.00pm – 3.00pm Contact Michelle Moss 01865 777796
TUESDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**PEEP for 1s** 9.30am – 10.30am Call 01865 395145 **Baby massage** 10.15am – 11.15am Contact Monika 07879 674425	**Creative Group*** for parents 12.30pm – 2pm (£1.50 contribution for materials) **Stay and Play** with lunch (small fee) 11am – 2pm NOTE NEW TIME! **The Listening Centre** 5.00pm – 9.00pm **Parent-talk** 7.30pm – 9.30pm contact Rosie Hill 01865 875482
	Orchard Meadow	**Helping with Maths Homework (KS2)** 9.15am – 11.15am Contact Valerie O'Malley 01865 779615	
	Pegasus 01865 777175	**Helping with Maths for Parents*** 9.30 am – 11.00 am Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615	**Walking Group** - meet at Pegasus gate Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615
WEDNESDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**Healthy Cooking** * starting 5 November 9.15am – 11.15am Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615 NEW **ESOL Women's group*** 9.30am – 11.30am 01865 773263	**Teenage and Pregnant** (TAP1) 1.00pm – 3.00pm Contact Claire Johnson for details 01865 773263 **Ante-natal Pilates*** starting 5 November 11.45am – 12.15pm Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615 NEW **Midwife Clinic** for post natal and baby checks, support and advice, 12.30pm – 2.30 pm - drop-in or phone 01865 221696 for an appointment **The Listening Centre** 5pm – 9pm
	Orchard Meadow		**PEEP Baby Group** 1.30pm – 2.30pm Call 01865 395145
	Pegasus	**Stay and Play** 9.00am – 11.30am	**Stay and Play** 12.45pm – 3.00pm
	Windale	**PEEP for 2s** 9.30am–10.30am, at the Dovecote. Call 01865 395145 **Help with Learning*** 9.15am–11.15am Contact Valerie O'Malley, 01865 779615	**Family Links*** starting 5 November 1.00pm–3.00pm. Contact Michelle Moss, 01865 777796
THURSDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**Agnes Smith Advice Centre** (for advice on benefits, money advice and debts) 10am – 1pm. Contact Jackie Knight 01865 770206	**Parents Supporting Parents group** 1pm – 2.30pm Contact Mikko Enticknap for details 01865 773263 **The Listening Centre** 5.00pm– 9.00pm
	Windale	**PEEP for 1s** 9.30am – 10.30am. Call 01865 395145	
	Pegasus	**Sewing Club*** 9.15am –11.15am. Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615	
	Orchard Meadow		NEW **Creative Group*** Starting 6 November 1pm – 2.30pm. Contact Anne Wells 01865 779615
FRIDAY THE BABY Café®	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**The Baby Café** (supporting breastfeeding) 10.30am – 12.30pm. Carole Roberts 01865 788688	**Stay & Play with lunch** 11am – 2pm (small fee) NOTE NEW TIME! **Post-natal Pilates*** starting 14 November 12.45pm – 1.15pm contact Anne Wells 01865 779615 NEW **Job Centre Plus** 12.30pm – 3.00pm Contact Claire Johnson for details
	Pegasus	**Mums' ESOL Support Group*** (alternate weeks) 9.15am – 11.00am Contact Joumana Hamad 01865 773263	
	Windale	**Parents Coffee Morning** 9.00am – 11.00am	
SATURDAY	**Cuddesdon Corner**	**Dads' Zone 10.00am – 12.00pm** Every other Saturday 8 + 22 November and 6 + 20 December	

Christmas Celebration

Cuddesdon Corner, Tuesday 9 and Friday 12 December,11am–2pm, £5 a family.

Contact Claire Johnson for details 01865 773263

SHOPPER'S CRECHE

Cuddesdon Corner, every Monday, 24th November to 15th December, 9.30am–12pm, £3.00 per child, (Late collection fee £6.00)

Book places with Claire Johnson, 01865 773263

COMING SOON....

- Early Development Group for parents of children with special needs. Contact Ruth Donaldson, 01865 779615
- Aromatherapy 1 & 2 at various venues. Contact Anne Wells, 01865 779615
- Creative Group at Windale

DIARY DATES

- **Saturday 6 December** - *Without Walls project:* making a sandpit and chime garden, Cuddesdon Corner, 10am–3pm
- **Friday 19 December** - Term ends

Children's Centres

Supported by SureStart

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

On the pathway to success

Left: The Pathway team

WITH A WIDE range of outdoor products ranging from compost bins to garden furniture the Pathway Workshop in Dunnock Way is emerging from a period of transition and some setbacks with a new confidence. There have been many changes put into place meaning that it is now much better placed to becoming firmly established on a secure financial and organisational base.

According to Finance and Social Programme manager, Jenny O'Loughlin, the charity, whilst retaining its ethos, is recognizable only by its name from when she started working there in 2000. She has seen many changes over that time, many of which have been instituted recently, and says that the project in the last financial year for the first time covered the costs of the workshop and is setting itself on a sound commercial footing.

The project, as Blackbird Leys residents will know, produces a wide range of quality hand-made furniture in its workshops made by people with a wide range of disabilities. The social support of the staff within the charity is extremely important and it is both a commercial venture and a place where people can learn practical and life skills. There are 18 staff made up of full and part timers and five volunteers, of whom most are from the Leys.

Managing Director Mike Kyle, who arrived at the project three years ago, said that over the last year the project had clawed its way back to a reasonable position with help from the Parish Council and other agencies. It is developing new products and has invested in new machinery which includes a new dust filtration system. The charity has both an office which doubles up as a showroom and a website (www.pathway-workshop.co.uk) from which products can be ordered.

As well as having off the shelf ready-made garden furniture and animal habitat products, they now produce a small gift range including doorstops, chopping blocks, place mats and coasters. They also offer a bespoke design and build service for garden furniture from bird tables and picnic tables to planters and log stores.

The charity is developing its training and social support programmes, which includes forklift driving, first aid, literacy and numeracy where people can get OCN qualifications and it has a successful record with a high number of trainees moving through to independent living. They have also been working with local young offenders and local community service personnel who are helping to clean up the site.

They have converted internal storage areas into meeting rooms that can be let out for community use or training. The noted aisled barn which sits between the project and the Spar shop will sometime soon be refurbished and come into play as an integral part of the facilities. At the moment it is being used for storage of materials. Funds are currently being raised to do this.

Last October the workers at Pathway were devastated to come in one morning to find that sewage had flooded their offices, it took some time to recover from this setback, but they have, and Mike has nothing but high praise for the staff who work at the project.

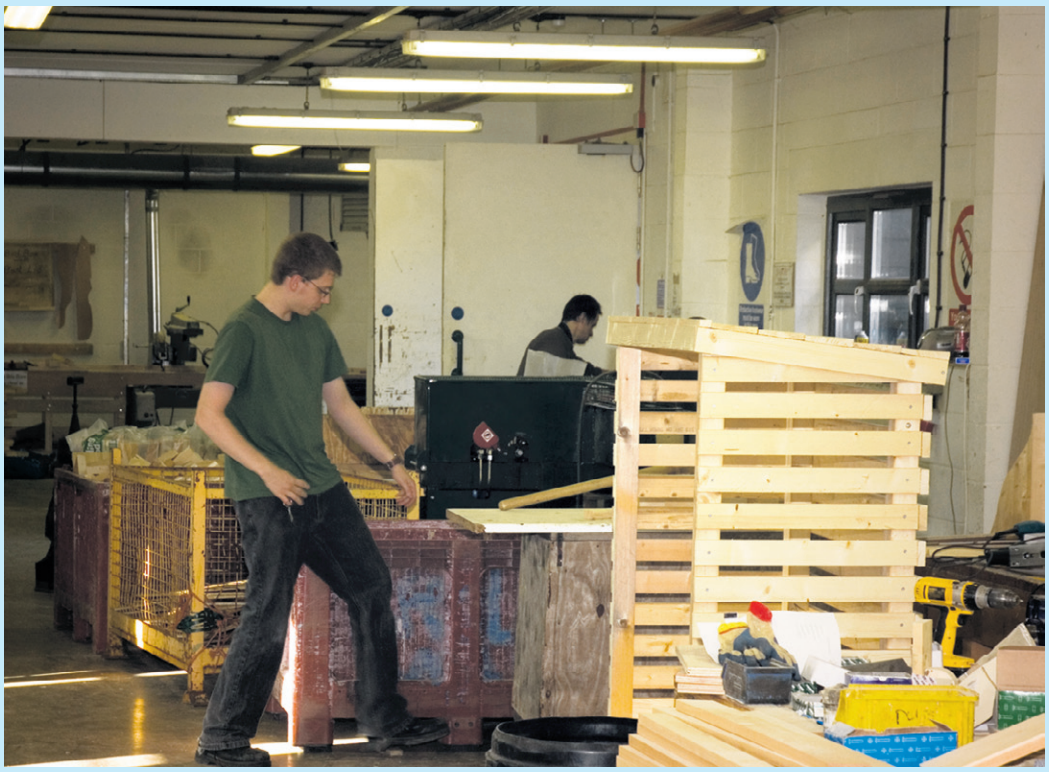
Pathway Workshop prides itself on using only high quality virgin weatherproof and mostly recycled wood obtained from sustainable forest sources. There's a big emphasis on making environmentally friendly products in an environmentally friendly atmosphere.

Not much gets wasted at Pathway, even the sawdust gets packaged up and goes off each week for greyhound bedding. Pathway uses an impressive 500 tons of recycled material a year, from which the workshop manufactures its durable products.

It's well worth popping in as it's a great place to find original, unusual and long lasting presents for anyone. They will make you most welcome.

Telephone: 01865 714111
Email: enquiries@pathway-workshop.co.uk
www.pathway-workshop.co.uk

Right: Off the shelf: coasters, cutting boards and door stops



In the Pathway workshop

Come and see
Pathway Workshops
New Winter 2008 Garden Furniture & Animal Habitat Range

..... including a new "small gifts" range of items priced between £2.50 and £20, suitable for Christmas or any special occasion.

INTRODUCTORY 15% DISCOUNT
on all stocked products until Christmas

Pop in and see the range of chopping boards, coasters, door wedges and hedgehog boxes or phone/email for details.

Help us to help others ... Your purchase will directly help local disadvantaged people get support, training and independence.

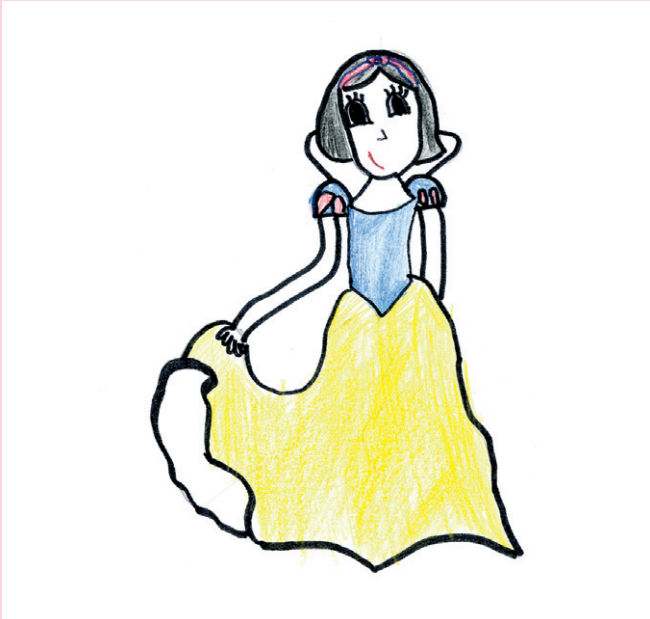
Pathway Workshop

Email : enquiries@pathway-workshop.co.uk
PHONE (01865) 714111
Dunncock Way, Blackbird Leys, Oxford OX4 7EX
www.pathway-workshop.co.uk for information
Registered Charity No : 1014416

Kira's our winner

Above: Competition winner Kira Bond.

EIGHT YEAR old Kira Bond was the winner of our October competition to create and send in a picture of a favourite pantomime character. Kira sent in this lovely picture of Sleeping Beauty and wins a family ticket for the pantomime at the Oxford Playhouse in December. Congratulations to her and thanks to all the other people who entered.



Right: Second prize goes to Carla Dominique C. Rico for her very pretty picture of Snow White. This is the second time Carla has been successful in one of our competitions. Well done Carla!

Above: Kira's winning picture. She says: "My favourite pantomine character is Sleeping Beauty. In my picture she just woke up after the prince gave her a kiss."

Leys Crossword Puzzle Competition

All clues are connected with the Leys. The entry with the most correct anwswers willl win a £25 voucher to spend at the Oxford University Press Bookshop. Open to all ages.

Across Clues

3. Reserve and brook (12)

4. School café converted (6,4)

5. A place where time does not keep (10)

9. Sacred centre (5)

11. They electrify the countryside (6)

13. Leys musical correspondent (6)

15. Verdant mound - (street name 5,4)

16. Both a river and a boat (8)

18. Minor (6)

19. Centre on the corner (9)

20. Place of Leys News (10,5)

Down Clues

1. Preying crescent (7)

2. Nearby place denotes former air use (6,7)

6. Original farm where estate first built (6,4)

7. Nearby village (10)

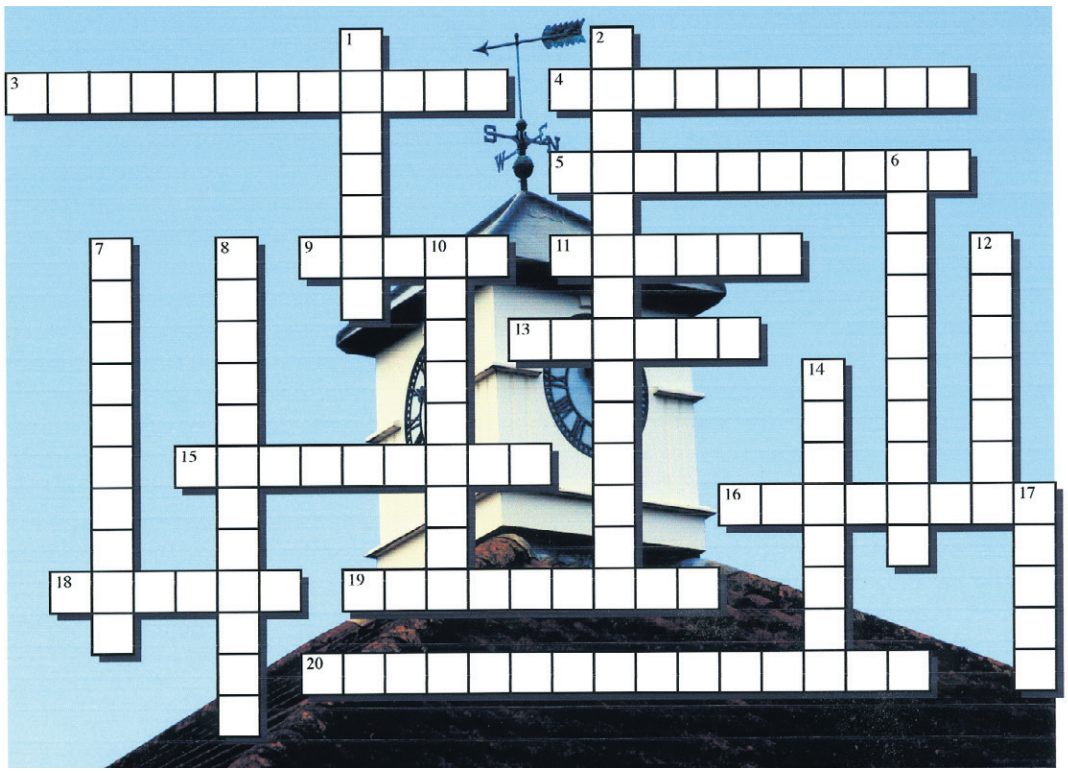
8. Street with Roman connections (7,5)

10. Original name of school (now closed) (9)

12. Named after famous football club (7)

14. A French twin (8)

17. Seasonal bush (5)



Name.....

Age.....

Address.....

.....

Phone.....

Send your entry by 1st January to:
Leys News
26 Kingfisher Green
Greater Leys
Ox4 7BX

We are always on the look out for artwork or poems to be featured in the Leys Creativity pages. If you want any of your poems, photos or artwork seen on these pages then send us an email to mail@leysnews.co.uk , or phone 01865 711756, or write to us at 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX.

DW CONTRACTORS

Many thanks to DW Contractors for sponsoring this page.

Family art splash

FUSION ARTS organised a series of free art and drama workshops at Cuddesdon Corner in October designed to provide an opportunity for all family members to get creative together under the guidance of professional artists.

The project invited families into a productive and imaginative environment where they made puppets and masks, and shared their stories through performing arts.

Family members enjoyed making shadow puppets and masks, and transforming them into characters, inventing stories and telling them on stage.

BMW Group Plant Oxford supported Family Art Splash.

Left: **Adam Hamad with his mask.**

Christmas comes but once a year

Christmas time is full of cheer
Christmas comes but once a year
It's the time to be happy and jolly
Put up the mistletoe and hang the holly

Yes happiness is certainly the key
Look at the fairy on top of the tree
The lights are twinkling as bright as can be
Its Christmas time once more

The snow is falling as night time is calling
It's a lovely sight to behold
It's Christmas Eve, as we sit by the fire
And our Holy stories are told

Let us not forget the reason
For each Christmas season,
As Christmas day draws nigh
We can also be jolly
With mistletoe and holly
So sing to the Lord on high

Old Santa he's coming with all his reindeer
A sure sign that Christmas is very nearly here
With church bells ringing and everyone singing
Yes Christmas time is here
The magic of Christmas is here once more
Snow lays deep upon the floor
The carol singers have come to call
It's Christmas time once more

Happy Christmas to everyone

by Joy E Presley (written in 1991)
A Blackbird Leys choir member

Right: **Last winter: photo by Cristina Fernadez-Santamaria**

Below: **Christmas illustration by Richard Brain**

Mental health in minority communities

A report by Ayian Sigal, an Ethiopian who has been living in Oxford for twelve years.

"We are still not getting it right"! According to Paul Purnell who opened the conference entitled "Tackling the root causes of mental health in the BME communities".

Paul Purnell, who is Oxfordshire Head of Social Care for Adults, opened the conference, which aimed to tackle the root causes of mental health in the minority communities. The conference was well attended by mental health professionals from the region that highlighted the general increase in mental health needs especially among minority people.

The conference was held in Oxford on 17th October at the Unipart Conference Centre in Cowley and was organised by Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT).

The conference was the vehicle for mental health professionals to share their experience and difficulties. However I fear the PCT policy may not incorporate the concerns facing the minority groups as expressed by mental health professionals at the conference.

There were a lot of issues being addressed such as cultural stigma and the role of religions in helping mental health patients in accessing services to help them get better. Another thing mentioned was that existing mental health systems are not working well for the ethnic minority communities. Amongst the observations made by participants were that ethnic minority patients feel that the NHS ignores their needs, and ethnic minorities have higher admission rates. A survey done in 2000 found out that 87% of ethnic minority patients felt that mental health services were institutionally racist

Mr Mehamoud Ibrahim, a community development officer from Swindon Borough Council, who attended the conference said, "Some of the key issues facing the BME communities in mental health matters are isolation, lack of support and accessing good and reliable information".

Ken Sa Gordon a mental health patient for 16 years from Greater Leys said "It will take a long time for change to happen because most of the nurses are 'bank nurses' in service and they are only there for the money and don't care about patients. Users are not listened to and it is time to start listening, I would like more freedom of expression because if the patients raise their voices they are sent to their rooms and not allowed out. It feels like prison more than hospital"

There were raised concerns from mental health patients who attended the conference, about policing in mental health. It questioned whether the police forces are getting enough training to deal with mental health patients.

Ayian Sigal added "from my experience of working with local African community groups we come across issues of language and cultural barriers, which is making it difficult when it comes to accessing different services before their health deteriorates further."

The strong message that came out of the conference was that the system is not working well with BME communities and they need to try harder to get it right to tackle issues like "institutional racism".

Left: Participant Jerry Tuitt said " They should understand their ethnicity."

Below: Mehamoud Ibrahim from Swindon Borough Council

The Boiler Room

Your Community Café

At Pegasus School, Harebell Road
Open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm
Saturday 9am to 3pm

Serving:

Baguettes – Salads – Soups – Cakes
Selection of hot/cold drinks
Full English Breakfast £3.00 (Saturdays Only)

A warm welcome to all

To claim your **FREE COFFEE**, bring this advert with you.
Offer valid until: 15th December

A place for all

Tour of Blackbird Leys by Melinda Tilley, Cabinet Member for Place, with Val Smith, city and county councillor.

CONSERVATIVE county councillor Melinda Tilley and Cabinet Member for Place was shown around Blackbird Leys in mid-September on a fact-finding tour, accompanied by local county councillor Val Smith. Mrs Tilley, who had not been in the locality before, was looking at areas of deprivation and was impressed with the community initiatives that she saw.

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

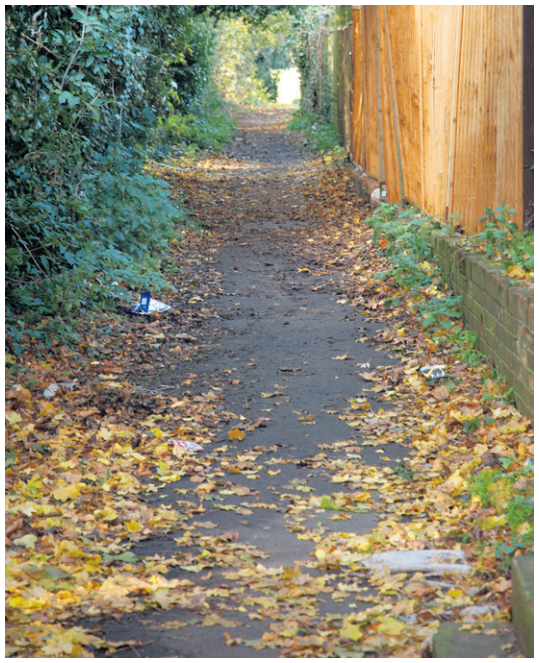
A report from October's Parish Council meeting

Clerk resigns
After 12 years service Helen Shayler has tendered her resignation as clerk to the Blackbird Leys Parish Council for personal family reasons. She had recently returned from a spell of maternity leave and will leave her post at the end of December. The part-time job is currently being advertised in local press. The council would prefer to find someone with local knowledge and if possible someone who lives locally.

Police post on the Leys
The council unanimously agreed to support the application for a change of use of the old health centre to a Thames Valley Police 24 hour a day post. Chairman Gordon Roper showed the meeting pictures of how the building and windows might look and was very supportive of the initiative to have police on the estate.

Falcon Close Knights Road
The council also supported the spending of £7000 to top up the £9000 committed by the South-East Area Committee to grade the 200 plus metres of the surface of the footpath between Falcon Close and Knights Road to a high standard. Councillor Cyril Martin commented that as the work had been needed for 48 years it was high time it was done. and 'well worth it.' It was noted that there should be a means of stopping motor bikes using the pathway installed.

Standards talk
The council heard a presentation from employees of Oxford City Council regarding the standards and conduct that members of parish councils should attain, in the light of recent changes to the regulations.



Mopeds and home working
The council also discussed the issue of moped riding on footpaths in Little Bury and a case of the owners of council-owned house knocking down garden walls to enable car parking. They also heard of a case of a welding business operating from a house on the estate and thought it should be referred to environmental health.

Monthly meetings
The council's meetings are always on the last Tuesday of the month, except for December, in the Jack Argent Room in the Community Centre at 7pm. Members of the public are always welcome to attend. There are currently two vacancies on the council.

Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion

Army Cadet Force

BLACKBIRD LEYS DETACHMENT

CALLING ALL 13 TO 18 YEAR OLDS
! MALE OR FEMALE !

?? What do YOU do on Thursday evenings ??
?? Fancy something a little different ??
How about:

TARGET SHOOTING	FIELD CRAFT	SKILL AT ARMS
MILITARY SKILLS	FIRST AID	SPORTS
SOCIAL EVENTS	DRILL	BTEC DIPLOMAS

There is also an opportunity to attend training weekends and our annual summer camp

The Army Cadet Force can offer all this & much more

!! INTERESTED !!
THEN POP ALONG AND SPEAK TO US

Blackbird Leys Detachment
Sandy Lane West
Littlemore
OX4 5LD

Thursday
evening
at
19:30 - 21:30hrs

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OUTSIDE THESE HOURS
PLEASE RING 01865 402292

Green Fingers

By Stuart Mabbutt

Consider the gardener

ON BEING ASKED "What do you do for a living?", one of my colleagues responded "I'm only a gardener!"
Which got me to thinking as to why gardening is considered such a lowly calling. Why are the wages so low? Why do some people depict us gardeners as old men, with long beards, flat caps, fermenting necks and with little intelligence?

When I look in the mirror, that's not who I see looking back at me. Well, not entirely anyway!

To me, those who garden are some of the most wholesome, worldly people I've met. They are generous, and enjoy sharing their knowledge, plants, tools and surplus produce with other people as much as enjoying the fruits of their own labours.

Gardening is perhaps the oldest profession, but it has never really recovered from the bad press it got when the first ever gardener started meddling in things that didn't concern him, and stole an apple. Which ended with him getting the sack and being banished from 'The Garden of Eden'.

"Gardening is perhaps the oldest profession"

Some people who employ a gardener, have gardens that are a joy to them, and these same people make the yearly pilgrimage to the Chelsea Flower Show, to gasp at the flower displays and the magnificent vegetables. But do they ever give a thought to those who made it all possible? They see an untidy and unkempt person with a sunburnt neck and muddy boots and say "Wonder who that is?" with someone else saying "Dunno, but 'e looks like a gardener!"

Much of our gardens are made up of plants of foreign origin, but they did not just appear here like migrating birds. They were imported centuries ago by gardening pioneers, going to some of the most inhospitable terrain in the world. Some even lost their lives pursuing these treasures.

When the plants appeared in this country it was the job of gardeners, less travelled, to study and research them so as to grow them successfully in our climate.

Gardeners of that age came up with theories, that still hold water even today which brings me to another barrier that we gardeners are up against, that some people don't know the difference between the use of the word 'theory' in everyday language and its use in the scientific arena.

In everyday language, someone's unusual perspective on life might lead them to have some half-baked theory. But in science, the word theory means a fully cooked idea! One which has been tested and observed and experimented with.

So next time you hear a gardener express a theory, don't dismiss it as a half baked idea, he may have spent decades coming to his conclusions by studying his plants.

Also, as the human population increases, so gardeners have invented new ways and new sources to feed those hungry mouths. All those rows of wine bottles out there in the supermarkets are filled with wine raised and produced by gardeners. Perfumes are distilled from flowers grown by gardeners. Medicines are extracted from plants brought into cultivation by gardeners.

The advance in growing techniques have seen new pests and diseases appear that can destroy crops, but so far, gardeners have risen to the occasion and found a cure in many cases.

Unfortunately, gardening still suffers a hangover from Victorian times, when a gardener would be fed and housed on a straw bed in a warm barn, in return for a hard day's work. As most people have access to a garden and tools, they feel anybody can do gardening. Whereas, even though we have access to the tools, boiler and equipment, we wouldn't get up one morning and say "I'm going to be a heating engineer today". But we are happy to wake up and say "I'm going to be a gardener today!"

So next time you sit around the table at a family gathering, to enjoy a sumptuous meal, just take a moment to look at all the produce, from the vegetables to the salad bowl, from the fragrant flowers in the centrepiece vase to the glorious wine you are about to sup. Then spare a thought for those who made it all possible, on whom we all rely so much, but reward so inadequately.

If we gardeners work together, we might be able to take over the world. But perhaps we already have! On re-reading this, I think my rates are due a yearly increase!

Happy Gardening!

WHAT'S ON

A quick guide to what's available on the estate. If you have a service or event you'd like to include in What's On, please ring 01865 711756. For more info and monthly events listings, see the Leys Listings bulletin sheet, pinned up in community centres and other public places around the Leys.

Advice

Agnes Smith Advice Centre
Gives free independent and impartial advice. Drop-in sessions are in the centre Monday 2.00–4.00pm and Friday 10.00am–12.00pm.
Also in the Farmhouse Tuesday and Thursday 10.00am–12.00pm.
Call 01865 770206 for further information or if you would like to arrange an appointment.

Children and young people

Leys Kiddie Club
In the Dovecote Family Drop-in Room, Mondays, Tuesdays,
Thursdays & Fridays, 9.30am–2.30pm. 75p. ☎ Ruth Brown, 07985 637487.

Beavers (aged 6-8)
Blackbird Leys Scout Hut on Sandy Lane. Tuesdays 5pm–6pm. ☎ 01865 714104

BLAP after school club
1 Cuddesdon Way.
Monday to Friday 3pm–5pm for children aged 5–16. ☎ 01865 747704

The Barn Youth Project
Session for ages 7–12 is on Mondays 5.30–7.30pm.
Session for young people aged 13–20 is on Wednesdays 7pm–9pm.

Blackbird Leys Youth Centre
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities and advice for young people.
☎ 01865 772886.

Cubs (aged 8-10½)
Blackbird Leys Scout Hut on Sandy Lane. Tuesdays 6.30pm–8pm. ☎ 01865 714104

Cheerleading for girls aged 6 & over
Leisure Centre on Pegasus Road. Tuesdays 4.30pm. 50p a session. Run by the Leys Youth Programme.
☎ Matt & Katie Gamble, 01865 427075.

Dovecote After School Club
(for 4–12 year olds)
Monday–Thursday, 3.15pm–5pm, at the Dovecote. Cost: 75p per session.

Parent session at Pegasus School
Each Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (Leys Children's Centre) 9.15am - 11.15am.
☎ Anne Wells on 01865 777175

35th Oxford Scout Group
☎ Duncan Bowler, 07766 293353

Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group
At Kingfisher Green.
The group provides a safe forum to explore issues of race and racism with other parents and occasional guest speakers, while the children have fun playing and getting to know each other.
☎ 01865 776691

5-a-side football for girls
Leisure Centre on Fridays.
5–6pm for years 3–6.
6-7pm for years 7 upwards.
Cost 50p. Run by the Leys Youth Programme.
☎ Matt & Katie Gamble, 01865 427075

5-a-side football for boys
Leisure Centre on Fridays.
4-5pm for school years 3–6.
5-6pm for years 7–9.
6-7pm for years 10 & 11.
Cost 50p. Run by the Leys Youth Programme.
☎ Matt & Katie Gamble, 01865 427075.

Computers

Blackbird Leys IT Hub (Blitz)
Blitz runs a drop-in when you can use the computers for free. 9.30am–4.30pm Monday to Fridays, 10am–1pm Saturdays. ☎ John 01865 714492

Learning and education

Able Centre
Free courses in Maths and English in friendly groups.
☎ Annette, 01865 776334

Oxford Brookes
Offer tasters and introductory higher education modules at special rates for Leys residents.
☎ Marie Jones 01865 484866
Marie.jones@brookes.ac.uk

Oxford Women's Training Scheme
☎ Helen McLuckie 01865 550227
hmcluckie@ocuc.ac.uk

Older people

Silver Circle
Meets at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre on Blackbird Leys Road. Tuesdays 1.00pm–3.30pm. Meet for trips, chats, tea, and bingo. ☎ 01865 435954.

Golden Circle
Meets for bingo, trips and tea at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre on Blackbird Leys Road. Thursdays 1.00pm–3.30pm. ☎ 01865 460592.

Stretch and Relax
Gentle exercise group for over 50s, Clockhouse Community Centre, Long Ground, Greater Leys every Tuesday 10-11 am. £1.50 includes refreshments afterwards.
Tel: 01865 395908.

Tai chi for the over 50s
Clockhouse community centre every Thursday, 10am–11am, £1.50.
Free refreshments afterwards (tea & light lunch) ☎ 01865 395908 or 07972751317

Monday lunch club for the over-50s
Clockhouse, 10am–1.30pm.

Thursday lunch club for the over-50s
The Barn, 10am–2pm.

Leys Over 60s Club.
Holy Family Church Hall. Wednesdays from 1.30pm–4pm. Meet for trips, bingo, card games, a chat and free refreshments.

New grants for community groups

LEYS NEWS has recently heard about some great funding opportunities from two foundations, with similar aims and objectives, which will be of interest to community groups in Blackbird Leys.

The Wates Foundation, a charitable trust, is launching a new programme from 1 December. It aims to alleviate distress and improve the quality of life by promoting a broad range of social priorities that include the physical, mental and spiritual welfare of the young and disadvantaged in the age group of five to 25. This includes the rehabilitation of offenders, community integration and cohesion and addressing substance abuse. The area of benefit has recently been widened to include Oxfordshire. Details of the new programme will be available on their website at www.watesfoundation.org.uk from the end of November.

The second foundation is The Elizabeth Jane Foundation which aims to alleviate conditions of distress, deprivation and disadvantage in children and young people. Specifically, The Foundation works with building family values and in crime prevention. Oxfordshire is one of the areas the foundation operates in.

Its priorities are promoting the family unit, parenting schemes, crime prevention and helping to provide opportunities for children and young people, again for the five to 25 age group. The grants programme operates on a rolling basis and normally a grant will be processed within six weeks.

Applications for grants are invited from registered charitable organisations with an annual income of no more than £200,000, but not from individuals.

One-off requests for grants under £5000 are invited for a specific project or body of work and a short follow up report is requested.

More information and an application form can be obtained from shiplake@oxfordshire.org or apply in writing to: The Elizabeth Jane Foundation,The Old Vicarage, Shiplake, Henley on Thames. Oxfordshire RG9 4BS. Enquiries on 0118 9402011.

The Oxfordshire Community Foundation is offering money under the Grassroots Grants banner to assist small local groups that are working to improve their communities in any way, shape or form. Local organisations can apply for between £250 and £5000 if they are not-for-profit voluntary or community groups. And connected to the local community.

More information about these grants can be found on www.oxfordshire.org or by contacting Wally Cox on 01865 798666 or grants@oxfordshire.org

Wellbeing

The Listening Centre.
Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
Mondays: 12.30pm–8.30pm.
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays: 5.30pm–8.30pm. ☎ 01865 794794

Oxford Survivors Free Drop-in
A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental Health Services. Relax, read, play board games, chat. Snacks, hot lunch and drinks available.
Fri and Sat, 10.30am–3.30pm
Blackbird Leys Community centre.
☎ 01865 455868 (answerphone)
oxford.survivors@supanet.com

Slimming World.
Every Thursday at the Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road, 7.00pm
☎ Gill 01865 730009

Leisure

Boxing training. Youth Centre at the Leys Linx Centre on Blackbird Leys Rd. Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 7.30–9.00pm. ☎ 01865 715815.

Blackbird Leys Choir
Orchard Meadow School Hall, Wed, 6.30pm– 8.30pm. ☎ Zoe 07870377251

Irish dancing
Sacred Heart Hall. Weds & Thurs, 5pm.

Free Dance classes for all
Experienced Dance Trainer. Starting on the 7th of January 2009. The Barn in Nightingale Ave. Be there are 4.30 to 6pm

Property

First Floor Flat For sale in Greater Leys £125,000.
One Bedroom, Gas Central Heating, Allocated Parking, Rear garden.
☎ 07974 791319 to view

. . . Church News . . .

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

☎ Fr. David Hartley, 01865 779658.
Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys OX4 6BD. Car park in Poulton Place. Serving Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Garsington and Cuddesdon.

Regular Services:

Sundays: Masses, 9.30am & 6pm.

Mondays: Mass, 9am.

Tuesdays: Rosary, 7pm, and Mass, 7.30pm.

Thursdays: Adoration, 6.30pm, and Mass, 7pm.

Fridays: Mass, 9am.

Saturday: Mass, 10am, and Confessions, 10.30am.

Mass in Portuguese:
We now have a Brazilian priest, Fr Frederico Ribeiro, working with Sacred Heart, and he will celebrate mass every Sunday at 12 noon. Everyone is very welcome.

Young people confirmed by Bp William Kenney on 17th October at Sacred heart

The Church of the Holy Family

☎ the Rev'd David Parry, 01865 778728.

Eucharist
Every Sunday, 10am

Children's Church
Sunday, 6.30pm

Timeout
Reflective evening worship.
Most Wednesdays at 7.30pm
(not 24th or 31st).
Fellowship, prayer, discussion, study.

Saturday December 6th
Christmas Bazaar, 12 - 3pm

December 21st
Community Carol Service, 6.00pm

December 24th
Christmas Midnight Communion, 11.30pm

December 25th
Christmas Day Communion and Carols, 10am

December 31st
Watchnight Service of the New Year, 11.30pm

January 4th
Covenant Service, 10am

The Leys Community Church

☎ Richard and Kate Colbrook, 01865 714153.
The Leys Community Church meets at 3.30pm on a Sunday afternoon at the Church of the Holy Family.
Meetings include special activities for children and young people.

Clockhouse staff at it again

photo: Jean Denham

Diane Jones, Day Care Assistant and Graham Hooper, Senior Day Care Organiser.

STAFF AT THE Clockhouse raised £114.10 for children in need. Graham Hooper, David Hancock, Diane Jones and Lynda Mair dressed in different costumes over four days to help raise funds for the cause. The staff work for Daybreak, based at the Clockhouse, which cares for the elderly with mental health needs. They dressed as Pudsey bear, pirates, toy soldiers and school children. Day care assistant, Diane Jones, who organised the week's events said "It was hard work but immense fun. I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of those who contributed and would like to thank them all, especially the staff of the Clockhouse, for their input and teamwork. Our centre's aim is to try and encourage our clients to have fun and go home with a smile on their faces, and they certainly have this week".
Graham Hooper, Senior Day Care Organiser said he thoroughly enjoyed the week's activities.

Daybreak Oxford have three centres, cater for up to 20 clients a day, and offers a range of stimulating group activities for older people with mental health needs.

. . . Your local representatives . . .

Parish Council

Chairman: Gordon Roper, **Vice Chair:** Gerry Webb, **Parish Clerk:** Sue Lee, **Treasurer:** Susan Fitzsimons.
Non-position holders: Anne Booker, Chris Hatton, Rae Humberstone (*see City Council section below*), Danny Johnston, Rik Marshall, Sophia Marshall, Cyril Martin, Carol Roberts, Rosemary Morlin, Val Smith *(see City Council and County Council sections)*, Pat Stannard.

For further details telephone 01865 734346 during office hours of 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday. Answering service outside office hours. The mailing address for the Parish Council is 10 Swan Street, Oxford OX29 4HU.

Oxford City Council

Blackbird Leys Ward:
Val Smith - *Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD ☎ 01865 305080
Email: valsmith@gmail.com or cllrvsmith@oxford.gov.uk (her city councillor entry)

Rae Humberstone - *Labour*
75 Little Bury, Blackbird Leys ☎ 07936 3390018 or 01865 779678
Email: cllrhumberstone@oxford.gov.uks

Both Val Smith and Rae Humberstone will be doing street surgeries every other week and leafleting through people's doors when they are in the area. They can visit people in their homes - ring or email to make arrangements or they can be seen in the Community Centre on Saturday mornings or in the Leisure Centre at other times.

Northfield Brook Ward:
Stuart Craft - *Independent Working Class Association*
Furlong Close, Oxford OX4 4QJ ☎ 07733 274324
Surgery: Every Tuesday from 6.30 - 7.30pm at the Clockhouse, Greater Leys.

Jane Elizabeth Lacey - *Independent Working Class Association*
71 Knights Road, Blackbird Leys ☎ 07947 225297
Surgery: Tuesday from 6.30pm to 7.30pm at the Clockhouse, Greater Leys.

Oxfordshire County Council

Leys & Lye Division:
Val Smith - *Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD ☎ 01865 305080
Email: val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Surgery: 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 11am - 12pm at Blackbird Leys Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Road

Barbara Gatehouse - *Labour*
51 Ash Grove, Headington
Oxford OX3 9JN
☎ 01865 741060
Barbara.gatehouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

Member of Parliament for Oxford East
Andrew Smith - *Labour*
Unit 1, Newtec Place,
Magdalen Road,
Oxford OX4 1RE

☎ 01865 305080
andrewsmith.mp@virgin.net

Surgery: Every 3rd Friday at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 3.00pm

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

WHAT DO AREA COMMITTEES DO?

The six Area Committees are responsible for the following:

Abandoned vehicles, allotments, cemeteries, decisions on planning applications, dog wardens, ditches and streams, public toilets, car parks, parks & countryside management, street cleaning, street naming, community centres.

SOUTH EAST AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Monday 1st December
Council Chamber, Town Hall
6.30pm

Monday 5th January
Cardinal House, Littlemore
6.30pm

Monday 2nd February
Cardinal House, Littlemore
6.30pm

Ring 01865 252249 for further information

Taekwondo champion

MAX BOND is a Taekwondo green belt with a blue tag and he's been the UK's open champion as well as a Welsh and Scottish open champion for his ability.

Max lives in Blackbird Leys, is 10 years old and took up the discipline when a friend invited him along to a session at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre three years ago.

Since then he has taken mightily to the discipline and not looked back, as well as attending the sessions at the Leisure Centre on Tuesday evening, he also attends a Sunday session in Botley.

He says that it's really helped him with fitness, concentration and there have been a couple of occasions when he has successfully defended himself on the street and in the playground.

Information about activities at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre on 01865 467020.

Max in action in Botley with Lucy Williams helping out

News from the Well-Being Hub

OXFORD CITY Boxing Club recently started running sessions at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 4.30 to 6pm. The sessions are designed for everyone to increase stamina, strength and build confidence. They include circuit work, bag work, sparring and in the future competitions. The sessions are open to all and will be run by ABA qualified coaches. The aim is to increase participation amongst disadvantaged groups in Blackbird Leys through traditional coaching.

The club is in a special partnership with the Oxford University community outreach team. In the future some of the participants might well share an Olympic experience as well as meeting past and present world champions at the Leisure Centre. Further information from the Well-Being Hub at the centre on 01865 467329.

Oxford Young Steps is a sports-orientated youth club which has a focus on basketball. Since they have been based with the Well-Being Hub they have become a registered charity and have raised funds, in excess of £100,000, to build an orphanage and hospital in the developing world. They also have the support of the England Basketball Team and are currently fundraising to lay the first brick for the hospital early next year.

The new community café at the Leisure Centre will be opening early in the new year and will offer a comprehensive menu for all Leisure Centre users and the wider community. A social entrepreneur will take the anchor role with a community kitchen with chef and business qualifications on offer. This is a much needed facility on the estate and will promote healthy eating in line with specialist workers based in the project. Look out for more details to be released in the new year

...Sports clubs...

Tell Leys News your news
and see it here in the next issue.
01865 711756
mail@leysnews.co.uk

Greater Leys Youth FC Update

The under 11's, 12's & 15's teams are now well into their first season in the Oxford Mail Boys League. All the teams have started well in their respective leagues and the boys are enjoying playing football for Greater Leys.

The club recently started an under 8's team and played their first game on Saturday 1st November against Crowmarsh Boys. The boys train on Saturday mornings between 10 and 11am at Blackbird Leys Park. The club is still looking for more boys and girls to join the new team.The club is also looking for a sponsor for the Under 8's team.

Anyone interested in sponsoring the team should contact Ian Fieldwick on 0781076898.

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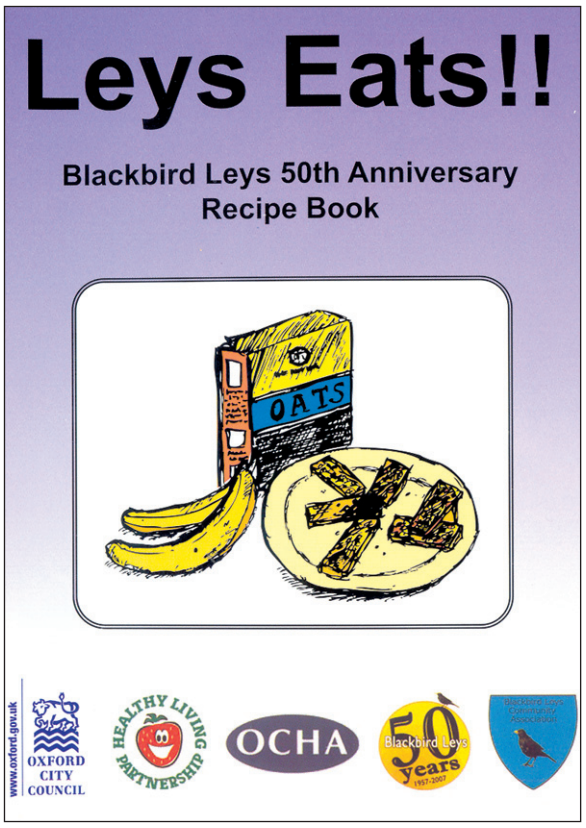

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